

Jury selection begins in Greeley transgender killing

By Monte Whaley, *The Denver Post*

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Angie Zapata (Colorado Anti-Violence)
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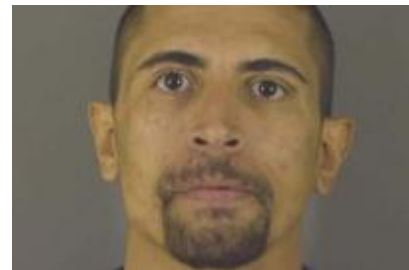
GREELEY — Jury selection began today in Weld County District Court for a murder trial that has gained national attention because the victim was a transgender woman.

Angie Zapata, 18, was found beaten to death in her Greeley apartment July 17. The suspect in her killing — 31-year-old Allen Andrade — is facing a first-degree-murder charge as well as an additional hate-crime charge.

Andrade allegedly attacked Zapata with his fists and a fire extinguisher after he discovered that Zapata was biologically a man. The two had met on an Internet dating site.

Andrade reportedly referred to Zapata as "it" to police and said all "gay things need to die."

His defense lawyers are expected to argue that Zapata's slaying



Allen Andrade, 31, allegedly attacked Angie Zapata in her Greeley apartment with his fists and a fire extinguisher after he discovered that Zapata was biologically a man. (Weld County Sheriff's Office) was a crime of passion and not premeditated.

Prosecutors claim Andrade hit Zapata, then began cleaning up her apartment, and hit her at least five more times. That, they argue, is a sign of cold-hearted calculation and deserving of a much longer prison sentence if he is convicted.

Today a jury pool of several hundred people reported to court. Judge Marcelo Kopcow is questioning a handful of potential jurors every half hour about specific answers on the forms they filled out.

Zapata's death is the first in the country to be prosecuted under the transgender classification of a hate-crime law, say activist groups. Several organizations are lending their support to the Zapata family in hopes of getting a national hate-crime law.

But prosecutors worry that all the publicity the case has garnered — including a full-page ad that ran last week in several Colorado newspapers and online — could taint the jury pool.

Also covering the trial is truTV, a cable channel focusing on high-profile murder cases. Jury selection will continue through today and go into Wednesday.